

SALT RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

Restoring a historic waterway while preserving an agricultural heritage

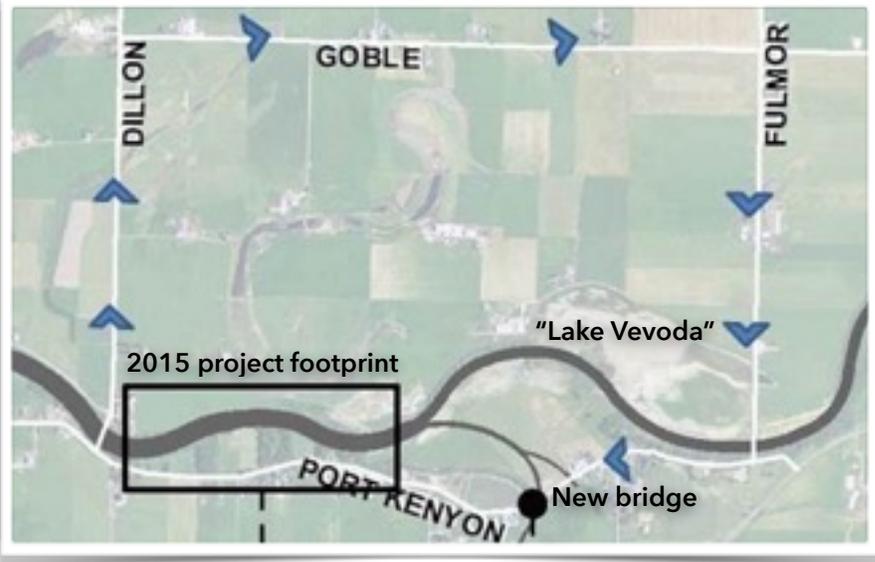
Who are we?

The Salt River Watershed Council (SRWC) board includes: Jay Russ (chairman), Dennis DelBiaggio (vice chairman), David Carr (secretary/treasurer), Ann Barbata, Jim Becker, Don Hindley, Carol Lee, Denver Nelson, Jay Parrish, Joe Russ and John Vernon.

What is our purpose?

Once the restoration project is completed, it is the SRWC's responsibility to:

- achieve a balance between agricultural use and environmental concerns
- encourage stewardship for the preservation of the Salt River Watershed, its habitat and wildlife
- educate the community on the importance of this watershed
- collaborate with local watershed groups and government agencies
- obtain funding to monitor and maintain this vital resource.



Phase 2 of the Salt River Ecosystem

Restoration Continues this Summer!

The construction season began in July on the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project and will continue through October. The project will move from the Dillon Road bridge to a location approximately 2,000 feet upstream. (See the black box outline above.) The excavation work will end just downstream of the confluence of Francis Creek and the Salt River. A pilot channel is designed to reach partially up the Salt River channel (continuing upstream from the 2015 major channel construction) that would alleviate high water levels on "Lake Vevoda." Funding resources for this year's work include the Department of Water Resources, Wildlife Conservation Board, Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (CDFW), and the Coastal Conservancy. Construction costs are in the \$1.9 million range.

This year's construction work is being managed by Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation (Hanford A.R.C.) of Sonoma, California. This is the same company who completed the project work during the 2014 construction season. (continued on page 2)





The Port Kenyon Property

The Salt River Watershed Council (SRWC) is the owner of the Port Kenyon Property, and under very strict stewardship terms imposed by the Coastal Conservancy grant (shown in the 2012 satellite image above). According to the terms and conditions of the grant, the SRWC acquired "the property for the purposes of agricultural open space, flood control, habitat

...conservations and public access." As with any joint purchase agreement, a number of conditions were agreed upon. These conditions include:

- a monitoring and reporting program
- an agreement that revenue generated will only be used to manage, monitor and maintain the property
- signage visible from the nearest public roadway identifying the property and the Coastal Conservancy's involvement.



Hanford A.R.C. has spent the past 28 years developing technical expertise on large scale restoration projects that include the restoration of Redwood Creek at Muir Beach and dune habitat restoration at Point Reyes National Seashore.

During this summer, 60,000 cubic yards of excavated sediment will be removed from the construction site and deposited on properties owned by Cahill and Mobley. The truck route (See map above) will exit the project site on Port Kenyon Road and follow on Dillon and Goble Roads before turning left on to Fulmor Road. The return route will follow Fulmor to Port Kenyon Road.

In addition to this phase of the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project, the Humboldt County Public Works Department will be replacing the Francis Creek culvert on Port Kenyon Road (See the black dot on the page 1 map). The county construction team will be removing the current structure and replacing it with a fabricated bridge. The Francis Creek channel will be cleared approximately 75 feet on each side of the newly constructed bridge.

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) Leadership Change



On July 15, the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) held a surprise retirement party for Donna Chambers, HCRCD executive director. During her eight year tenure, Donna was instrumental in developing conceptual plans, project designs and initial funding for the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project. Jimmy Smith, former Humboldt County Supervisor, spoke at the event and thanked Donna for her leadership on the Salt River project. (continued on page 3).

The Port Kenyon Property

Referred to as the "Port Kenyon Property" by the council, this parcel provided a staging area for the 2014 construction season. Construction equipment, redwood logs (used as channel diversion structures) and wood chip piles were staged on the property.

Now that the construction phase on the property is completed, the council has generated sufficient revenue from hay sales and pasture rental to cover property taxes, insurance and property maintenance. Income for 2012-2013 came from a grazing lease. Income for 2014-2015 came from a combination of multiple hay cuttings and land use rental. Last year, about 20% of the productive land became permanently utilized as part of the Salt River Restoration Project. With this decrease in land available for the production of income and, in an effort to ensure its ability to cover future costs, the Council has successfully applied for Williamson Act status, which will result in decreased property taxes going forward.

SRWC board members Jay Russ, Jim Becker and Andy Albin (alternate) have formed a committee to oversee land use. SRWC board member, Denver Nelson, led the Williamson Act effort.



The HCRC is the lead agency on the Salt River restoration project.

Also in attendance at Donna's retirement party was Jill Demers, the new HCRC executive director. Jill was the former vice president of Coastal Ecosystems Institute of Northern California (CEINC) where she managed grants, contracts and projects. Prior to her work at CEINC, Jill was executive director at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Jill stated, "I look forward to continuing Donna Chambers' legacy of strong support for the Salt River

Ecosystem Restoration Project and to the ecosystem and agricultural benefits the project provides."

A Tale of Two Rivers: Salt and Napa

On Monday, July 20, 2015, SRWC board members Dave Carr, Carol Lee, Jay Parrish and John Vernon along with Doreen Hansen from the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District traveled to the Napa River Valley. The purpose of this trip was to tour the Napa River Restoration Project and meet with members of the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Rick Thomasser, Operations Manager, and Jeremy Sarrow, Resources Specialist, led a field tour of various locations along the Napa River from their offices in the City of Napa upstream to the Rutherford reach near St. Helena.

The various projects (see photo below) are on private property where the landowner has agreed to allow the Flood Control district to modify the river bank reducing erosion and sedimentation and restoring habitat. The project work is funded by both tax assessment (60%) and state and federal grants (40%). The tax assessment is based upon a county wide half cent sales tax increase approved by voters in 1998.

The SRWC has extended an invitation to Rick and Jeremy to visit the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project later this year. Both groups plan to stay in touch and monitor each project's progress.

For more information on the Napa River Restoration Project, go to the Napa County website: <http://www.countyofnapa.org/flooddistrict/>

